



# Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to the customers we serve.

July 2019

## Leadership Message

### Protecting Water Resources Through Goals

By Kim Gubbe, Director of Planning and Compliance



In the last couple decades, our communities have grown, our state can be found in the agricultural limelight, and our fishing industries have grown with international recognition. All these important contributors to our growing economy have placed an increasing demand on our water resources. Recognizing the growing demand, the Washington State Legislature passed laws requiring water suppliers to comply with certain rules and regulations that will ensure the longevity and safety of our water resources for our communities and fish.

These rules affect all Group A water systems (water systems with 15 connections or more) and requires water utilities to:

- meter and collect water use data throughout the year for each system,
- create goals for consumer conservation, and
- evaluate leakage and rate structures that encourage water use efficiency.

To meet these requirements Thurston PUD created and approved a 6-year plan that that revolves around a single goal that we try to meet. That goal is:

**Reduce and/or maintain the average annual equivalent residential unit (ERU) water usage for all accounts, per Group A system, to a value of 250 gallons per day through 2021.**

For 2018, customers as a whole, and on average, are meeting the conservation goal. To help meet this goal Thurston PUD has offered customers irrigation timers, toilet replacement rebates, water efficient showerheads and showerhead timers. This year we are offering to replace meters with an advanced meter. For \$50.00 and a \$3.00 monthly app subscription fee, customers can have an advance meter installed and can track their water use with the Eye On Water app. Eye On Water can help track water use, and determine where users can conserve, and send alarms if usage patterns change.

Reducing system leakage to 10 percent is an ongoing goal that most water utilities strive to meet; the PUD is no different. Our team works hard to keep up with aging infrastructure and to discover leaks. Customers are our greatest resource when discovering leaks. If you see water pooling where it should not, please give our Customer Service Team a call at (360) 357-8783. Our goal is to meet the 10 percent goal, or a 3 gallons or less per minutes leak loss goal.

These goals are compiled into a Water Use Efficiency Report and published on our website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). Just click **Water Systems** on the front page and then click **Annual Water System Reports**. If you live on a Group A water system, your report will be there. If you don't know which water system you're on, please give our Customer Service Team a call, and they would be happy to share that information with you.

### Thurston PUD Commissioners

#### District 1

Linda Oosterman


#### District 2


Russell E. Olsen


#### District 3


Chris Stearns

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## The Value of Water: Fire Hydrant Maintenance Underway

*Not many people know that fire hydrant maintenance is part of a water system's infrastructure that water utilities are responsible for maintaining.*

Thurston PUD not only provides safe drinking water to its customers, but it also plays an important role in public safety. Part of owning water systems requires us to implement important preventative programs like conducting annual testing of the fire hydrants and the valves within them.

There may be a time in your neighborhood that you see Thurston PUD Field Technician Jake Boogerd who is leading the District's **Hydrant Maintenance Program**. "The District owns and maintains 240 hydrants in some of our larger water systems," Jake stated. "In the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system alone, we maintain over 100 hydrants."

Hydrants are an important, unsung hero in water utility operation. Not only do they play a key role in allowing the district to flush water systems in large volumes, they more importantly help fire departments extinguish fires. "If there is ever an emergency, we need to make sure the hydrants are operational. The time of an emergency is not the time to find out a hydrant has failed," said Jake.

An important component to each hydrant is a device called an isolation valve. An **isolation valve** is a valve that stops the flow of water from the pipe through the hydrant. "If a hydrant gets hit--and that happens more often than you would think—an isolation valve allows us to shut off the water to the hydrant without having to shut down the entire water system," he said.

The program consists of building a detailed database of all PUD-owned hydrants, which includes verifying the location, validating the make, model, year, and checking isolation valves. Because of advancements in technology, Jake is able to electronically map each hydrant, which is great data for the District to use as we move toward more electronic mapping of all our systems. Checking isolation valves is equally important because road work and construction can lead to valves that get buried or paved over, making it impossible to access. We also inspect and operate each hydrant to ensure it is functioning properly. This 21 point inspection includes basic maintenance like clearing obstructions, and replacement of any hydrants that are not operating correctly.



"Some fire hydrants that we have are from 1949, and some are from 2015," Jake said. "I think that things that were made back in the old days were made with better quality." Jake may be correct about the quality of products made decades ago, but all good things come to an end. Water utilities across the nation are facing the pressure of replacing aging water infrastructure. Hydrants are not used every day, so keeping a 70-year-old hydrant online may be an acceptable practice; but a mainline pipe that has been used every single day around the clock for 70 years may not be as structurally sturdy.

The District will continue its hydrant maintenance work through the summer. If you seek Jake in your neighborhood, take a second to say hi to him as he's working.

## Mow The Grow: Accurate Reads By Making Your Meter Box Accessible

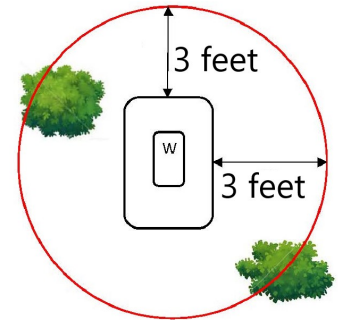
We all love a good game of hide and seek, but in water utility field operations, playing hide and seek with your water meter uses up precious time and resources.

Our meter readers average about 300 meters reads a day. Keeping the meter clear helps them do their job safely and efficiently. If our meter readers have difficulty accessing or locating your water meter because of landscaping, parked cars, trash and recycling bins, a meter reader may have to return to do their job. If they are unable to get a read, they will leave a friendly reminder on your door and our billing team will have to estimate your bill for that month. We will also follow up with a letter in the mail. Water consumption and true bill amounts will be reconciled on the next month's bill.

Here's how you can help meter readers get you the most accurate read for your bill:

### Clear Away Trees, Bushes, and Plantings

- Trim bushes, trees and grass that block the way or cover the meter.
- Minimize plants in the area which meter readers must travel through to get to your meter.
- Remove all branches hanging lower than three feet over the meter box.



### Watch Your Pets

- Keep pets away from the path that leads to your meter.
- If you have a guard dog for security, please let us know so that we can make sure that our meter readers and other utility personnel are aware of this. We may ask that you arrange to confine the dog during the day that your meter will be read.

### Objects that cover or block your meter

- Please make sure that no objects cover or block access to the meter box. Items we have found blocking water meters include cars, trailers, garbage cans and recycling bins, construction equipment or supplies, landscape bark or gravel.

### Locked gates

- If your meter is located behind a gate that is normally kept locked, please contact us to arrange access. We often obtain keys from customers who wish to secure their property. And, as long as the lock is accessible from the exterior of the gate, this presents little problem for our meter readers' access.

## Examples



Sometimes, we will have to estimate your read if we can't access your meter.



Peek-a-boo: There are two water meters hidden in this photo.

## Ask a PUD Employee

### *What is the difference between pressure and flow?*

**Water flow** refers to the amount of water coming out of a hose, faucet or other pipe fixture in a certain amount of time. **Water pressure** is the amount of force that is put on the water to make it move from one place to another.

Water flow and water pressure are two very different things. Water flow is measured in gallons per minute (gpm) and is a measurement of how much liquid goes through your pipes. Water pressure is measured in pounds per square inch (psi). It is a measurement of how much stress, or force is put on the water as it moves through pipes.



If you think you may have a problem with your water pressure or flow but are not sure where to start, think about whether the water flows more vigorously at certain points of the day or when many lines are open at once. If the water flow slows during peak water usage hours, or if it changes only when you turn on multiple faucets, then this means that pressure is not high enough to keep water moving through all the lines at one time. If, however, water flow is reduced to a trickle at all times, or if water runs well through one line and not another, then the problem probably is a blockage resulting in poor water flow out of the pipe.

## Meet the PUD: Anthony Dahmen, Field Technician I



Anthony Dahmen  
Field Technician I

Hi, my name is Anthony Dahmen. I have worked for the PUD for three years now. I started off as a Meter Reader, and as I have learned the trade, I have been promoted to a Field Technician I position. My daily tasks usually consist of maintaining chlorine levels at roughly 20 different water systems. I'm also involved in leak and emergency repairs, flushing, and miscellaneous service requests. I enjoy maintaining efficient chlorine levels because the disinfection means I help contribute to providing safe drinking water to customers. Something that makes me feel the most fulfilled is helping our customers with miscellaneous questions and problems.

I have a six year old daughter and now that it's fishing season we have been spending a lot of time out on the lake fishing and enjoying this beautiful summer. We also have a few weekend camping trips coming up which are always a blast!

A piece of advice that I would give to customers is if you have a problem or concern with your water, talk to other people in your community or who are on your water system—they may be experiencing the same problem.

## Water Word Scramble

Unscramble the words. Clues are found within the newsletter.

1. RTEAW SRESPRUE \_\_\_\_\_
2. EATRW WFOL \_\_\_\_\_
3. EIFE DYHRNAT CANEMTNNAIE \_\_\_\_\_
4. LOTONISIA LVVAE \_\_\_\_\_